

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3082

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STUTTGART 1153

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELTN ETRD GW US

SUBJ: AUTOMOBILE FUEL CONSUMPTION LEGISLATION

1. JOACHIM ZAHN, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DAIMLER BENZ, SOUGHT OUT CONGEN OFFICERS AT A SEPTEMBER 2 LUNCHEON TO INQUIRE AS TO OUR INTERPRETATION OF RECENT LEGISLATION CONCERNING LIMITS ON FUEL CONSUMPTION OF AUTOMOBILES TO BE SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES. ZAHN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEW LAW, WHICH HE UNDERSTOOD WAS SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT ON DECEMBER 22, 1975, AND WHICH WOULD COME INTO EFFECT IN 1985, WAS THAT ALL MANUFACTURERS MARKETING MORE THAN 10,000 AUTOMOBILES ANNUALLY IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MARKET A SET PERCENTAGE OF VEHICLES WITH FUEL CONSUMPTION HIGHER THAN 28 MPG. ZAHN'S REACTION WAS THAT WHILE IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR DIVERSIFIED US CORPORATIONS TO COMPLY, FOR DAIMLER BENZ THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, UNLESS IT MADE THE DECISION TO ENTER THE SMALL CAR FIELD. ZAHN EXPRESSED NO INTEREST IN DOING SO, AND FURTHER FELT THAT IT WOULD BE VERY MUCH AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY IF THIS LAW DID INDEED REQUIRE DAIMLER BENZ TO ENTER THE SMALL CAR FIELD. THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE FOR IT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET. NEITHER CONSIDERED AN ACCEPTABLE COURSE OF ACTION FOR DAIMLER.

2. DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO FROWARD ASAP TEXT OF LEGISLATION, ITS PRESENT STATUS, AND ANY INTERPRETATIVE MATERIAL.

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IALS WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL TO POST IN RESPONDING TO DAIMLER.

ZAHN WILL BE SENDING ONE OF HIS STAFF TO THE CONSULATE IN
THE NEAR FUTURE TO FURTHER EXAMINE THE PROBLEM. JENKINS

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Message Attributes

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